ceived arose from their observation having been on dry and not fresh specimens. The upper side of the tongue is rugous, and the point, especially of the upper part, almost horny. Hence, he esteemed its functions threefold: 1st, From that portion of the tongue which is nearest, the point being supplied with an adhesive secretion, a portion of its food, as in the Bee-eater, readily adhered to it; 2nd, in a degree prehensile, it somewhat discharges the functions of a hand; and 3rd, with the sharp hard point of the upper filament, it possesses the power of impaling and retaining its victims. With regard to the os hyoides, its cornea are, as in the Woodpecker, much elongated, and curved round behind the head; to this powerful muscles are attached, and hence the rapidity and vigour of the motions of the member.

MICROSCOPICAL SOCIETY.

April 22nd—Mr. Owen, the President, in the chair.

Seven members were elected. Dr. Lindley communicated a short account of his observations on the antheridia of *Polytrichum*, in the cells of which are contained microscopic animalcules of the genus *Vibrio*. This discovery, made by Unger, in reference to the antheridia of *Sphagnum*, and afterwards observed by Meyen, has been confirmed by the observations of Dr. Lindley, who gives the following description.

The antheridia contain a cellular mucous substratum of great transparency, and in each of the cells lies one coiled up *Vibrio*, which turns round and round within the cell with such rapidity, that it resembles a cyst in very active motion, the dark head of the *Vibrio* forming an eccentrical point round which the rotatory motion takes place. As soon however as the *Vibrio* gets into the water, its tail becomes straightened, and then the true nature of the moving body becomes apparent. The paper was accompanied by living specimens of the object.

Mr. Bowerbank read a paper descriptive of four new forms of vegetable tissue, occurring in silicified wood from Antigua, &c.

The three first of these are from Dicotyledonous woods, and present some interesting varieties of reticulated vascular tissue. In one example the thread of the net-work is filled with numerous irregular vesicular cavities, not exceeding the $\frac{1}{13000}$ of an inch in diameter; and in a second the interstices appear to contain the remains of discoid organs like those seen in the vessels of Ephedra, to which genus the author thinks the fossil may probably be referred. The fourth form is from a silicified palm, and consists of

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Messrs. John Dalrymple and Varley communicated the result of their observations on the circulation in *Closterium*, and also on the structure of other allied genera.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ON A TORPEDO TAKEN ON THE IRISH COAST.

In the last week of October 1838, a Torpedo, taken on the Irish coast by a fisherman who supplies the Dublin market, was brought to the metropolis, and when quite recent purchased by Dr. Jacob, Professor of Anatomy, &c. to the Royal College of Surgeons. When in Dublin some time afterwards, I embraced the opportunity of examining the specimen, which was at once afforded me with Dr. Jacob's usual kindness and liberality. The fish, from the careful manner in which it had been kept, was with the exception of the electric organs (which had been removed) still perfect, and for every purpose of description in as good a state as could be desired. My chief object was to ascertain its species, as even in our latest works —those of Jenyns and Yarrell—that of the Torpedo of the British seas is considered to be undetermined. Although the investigation was on the whole unsatisfactory, owing to the confusion in which the species of Torpedo are at present involved; the notes made with reference to the works consulted on the subject may possibly be worth transcribing.

Of Gesner's figures, none accord with the individual under consideration, and if they be correctly drawn, it differs in species from them. It does not agree with either of the Torpedos given by Aldrovandus, nor with those of Johnston—his appear to be copies from preceding works. Willughby's figure (*T. maculosa*) is the same as that of Aldrovandus. With one taken on the coast of France, at Rochelle, and figured by Walsh in the Philosophical Transactions for 1773, vol. lxiii. tab. 19. my specimen is evidently identical; the only difference worthy of note is, that the spiracles are represented as notched, which they are not in the specimen, and this cannot be a sexual character, as Walsh's fish was a female as well as the pre-

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